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Jennifer Pritzker to donate \$10 million to Loyola

LYNNE MAREK  

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Billionaire Chicago philanthropist and real estate developer Jennifer Pritzker and her foundation plan to give \$10 million to Loyola University Chicago in honor of her mother, Audrey Ratner.

Loyola plans to direct the money toward a variety of programs, including scholarships for students who are military veterans, the children of veterans, and ROTC students, as well as those studying to be teachers. It will also establish an endowment for the school's Hillel House, which supports Jewish educational and cultural programs, and to a fund to support the study of dyslexia and other

reading disorders.

"My mother and I graduated from Loyola as adult undergraduate students—she was a busy mom, and I was in the military," Pritzker said in a statement. "We both respect Loyola's mission to educate students of all backgrounds and ages. We both believe that education is the great equalizer in a democratic society."

Ratner earned a degree in education in 1978, and Pritzker earned a degree in history the following year.

Pritzker, 67, who publicly **identified as transgender** in 2013, took a break from active duty in the Army to attend Loyola and later joined the Illinois Army National Guard, retiring in 2001 with the rank of lieutenant colonel and an honorary National Guard promotion to full colonel. She also founded **Tawani Enterprises**, which invests in and restores properties in the Chicago area, including on the city's North Side and in Evanston. A property management business she owns oversees some of the properties as bed-and-breakfast spots and party event venues. The enterprise includes the Tawani Foundation and the **Pritzker Military Museum** & Library on Michigan Avenue.

Ratner became a fourth-grade teacher at Francis Parker School in the city and a "lifelong champion and supporter of access to education," the statement said. She was focused on reading techniques and helped implement new approaches at the school. In addition, she taught at a residential unit for the Jewish Children's Bureau of Chicago.

In response to questions, Pritzker said in an email: "I am dedicating this endowment to my mother because she has influenced and inspired me through her giving and helping others. She always had a strong sense of community, and because of her charitable giving and volunteering, she has had a significant impact on my life and those around her." The donors declined to participate in interviews.

Pritzker is a cousin to **J.B. Pritzker**, the billionaire Chicago investor who is running for Illinois governor as a Democrat. Their family fortune derived from prior Pritzker generations' businesses, including one-time ownership of the Hyatt Hotels and Marmon Group.

Pritzker's upfront donation will be \$5 million, with a dollar-for-dollar match with other donors for up to \$5 million more over the next five years, said Christian Anderson, a spokesman for the school. The "potential impact" of the contribution could grow to more than \$15 million. "There's a piece of this also that challenges us to be creative and innovative," Loyola President Jo Ann Rooney said in an interview.

Rooney said she was grateful for the impact the gift will have on students, 97 percent of whom receive some financial aid, and on the school's programs. Planning for the gift with Pritzker was several years in the making. Rooney said her predecessor, the Rev. Michael Garanzini, first began working with Pritzker on the possibility of the contribution.